



National SMSC Quality Mark Verification Report

Name of School: Allington Primary School

Headteacher: Carolyn Howson

SMSC Leads: Kayleigh Wright and Emily Harber

Verification visit: 14/06/23

Dear Carolyn,

I am delighted to inform you that because of the recent successful verification visit, Allington Primary School has been awarded **Gold** level of the National SMSC Quality Mark, and this has been confirmed by the Quality Assurance Panel.

It was lovely to visit a school that has come full circle; from learning about the SMSC Quality Mark at another school's Beacon Twilight, right through to verification, and I feel very lucky to have been part of it and get to see Allington's SMSC provision in person. I was thoroughly impressed with the variety of evidence provided to support your submission and the way that your team, led so well by Kayleigh and Emily, conducted the verification. Allington is a school that genuinely thinks of everything.

I would like to begin by thanking your wonderful pupils. They were a delight to speak to and gave such awesome, complete and wonderful answers to my questions. It was also lovely to see how supportive they are towards each other. When asked how they would describe their school, one child replied with the word 'focused' and when asked to explain a little more, she said, 'Our school is focused on education, happiness and mental health!' They also used words like: unique, diverse, amazing, a family, outstanding, excellent, cool and everything. One child said, 'Everyone is always really happy and our teacher makes sure that we are always learning new things.' They explained how rudeness is rare and sometimes there can be unkindness however, as one child said, 'We need some unkindness to reflect the real world and make sure we are ready for it!' The reaction and buzz when the THINK values, praise pads, postcards and stickers were mentioned was heartwarming and really made me smile. They also delighted in telling me about 'Now Press Play' and how, 'they are transported with perfect imaginary into an adventure.' As we brought the conversation to a close, one child said, 'I would just like to say that our Headteacher is very nice and very smiley!'

It was so lovely to lead the Governor meeting with 4 governors. They all spoke about Allington with such pride, always matched with huge smiles. They were able to discuss why SMSC is important to the development of children, the continuous support from all school staff and how the happiness of the children is always at the forefront. They also used words like, 'family, colourful and nurturing' to describe the school and commented how, 'everything we see reinforces the openness and the strength of the school. 'There is an open-door policy and there is always someone there to talk to about any worries.' They also reflected on how the school builds resilience and how exam time is dealt with by making it a 'nurturing experience'. One governor said, 'There are not classes of 30 pupils, but rather groups of children who are all individual. This school gives the best experience to all pupils.'

Thank you also to the two parents for taking the time to talk to me. Both mothers were so heartwarmingly honest and positive, and used words such as 'family feel, happy and bright' when describing the school. They expressed their gratitude and praise for all teaching staff,

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particularly during the pandemic when teachers tried their best to keep all children connected and how every child received notes, certificates and even a teddy. They described how some staff members have worked in the school for more than 15 years and how this reflects the family feeling that embraces you. One mother commented how her child recently said, 'I don't like school! I love it!' It was lovely to hear how well attended the most recent event of an outdoor cinema was and how the PTFA hosted the event for free, making it as inclusive and open to every child and their family. When asked if you had a magic wand what would you change about the school, one mother replied, 'That my child wouldn't have to leave in year 6!'

Finally, I would especially like to congratulate Kayleigh and Emily for coordinating this wonderful achievement and completing a very thorough and reflective self-review document. They both display such passion and commitment for SMSC, which is a real strength for the school.

There really are so many positive and creative initiatives at Allington with a vast array of opportunities and activities to enrich SMSC and the lives of your pupils. I congratulate you and everyone and the school community on the Gold standard of SMSC education that is afforded to your pupils.

Strengths of the school's SMSC development:

Through your self-evaluation, the evidence you provided and our discussions it is evident that there are many clear SMSC related strengths at Allington; the following are a just a few key examples:

- School displays. The amount, quality, relevance and meaning of all your school displays is wonderful. You constantly reinforce SMSC, your values and celebrate your pupils and the community with such breadth and enthusiasm. The graffiti style display in the hall with the words, 'Own your Magic' is particularly inspiring.
- The reinvention of your school values; Together, Happiness, Inspiration, Nurture and Creativity = THINC. This has been a huge success and children displayed a great understanding of these values and their importance. Parents also commented on how successful and embedded the values are. They are not just words for show, they are words that the school community aim to live by.
- The wonderful citizenship books and your citizenship curriculum. The pupils were very proud to show off their citizenship books and were able to reflect on the learning from different sessions. They described their appreciation at having these learning opportunities and recognised that not all schools have these focus lessons on things that matter in the world.
- The school culture empowers staff to divert from learning plans and seize opportunities to lead on discussions and respond to the needs of the class. One class was taking part in a silent debate on different family types. The questions posed to the children were extremely thought provoking and the silence in the room allowed for calm reflection, critical thinking and honest responses.
- Parental engagement and involvement is good – Parents are welcomed and invited into school on a number of occasions such as themes days, career days and heritage days. The school also aims to be very responsive to parental needs. The day previous to the verification, the school hosted a 'Resilience Workshop for Parents'. Your newsletters are not publicly displayed on your website unlike the vast majority of schools. Rather they are exclusively shared with your families of pupils. Your virtual

voice is very warm and genuine. It should also be noted how the school website includes a 'Jargon and Glossary' page in order to support parents with the wide range of terms used at school - including the definition for SMSC!

Suggested areas for development:

SMSC practice at Allington Primary is excellent, so recommendations to develop your provision, ethos and approach to SMSC are therefore more difficult suggest. You could consider some of the following areas for even further development:

- Consider working towards a mental health award such as the Carnegie Centre of Excellence's Mental Health in Schools Award to celebrate and showcase your positive work in this area.
- As discussed in our meeting, make links to organisations such as Inspiring the Future to enhance your offer even further around careers and the world of work.
- Consider working with a link school in an inner city and/or abroad as we discussed potential international links through the Quality Mark.
- Consider renewing your subscription to the SMSC resources provided by Young Citizens and engaging with their social action opportunities, such Make a Difference in a Day. <https://www.youngcitizens.org/resource/make-a-difference-in-a-day/>
- Look at further ways to promote British values and pupil voice. Votes for School is a great resource to aid discussions and debates in challenging areas and within current affairs. Pupils will build on their knowledge and skills when there are conflicting views/ topics. Consider planning a trip to London and the Houses of Parliament.
- The pupils' passion and enthusiasm could be used to explore the idea of pupil led clubs.

Thank you once again for welcoming me into your school. Your positive culture and ethos are infectious. I can see why pupils are proud to belong to the Allington Primary Family.

Verifier: Victoria Quijada

Chair of SMSC Quality Assurance Panel: Yvonne Richards

Please note that this award is recognised for 3 years, and that re-verification should be sought by June 2026.